



## News Release

For Immediate Release  
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### **Gonorrhea Rates Go Up Dramatically in Utah**

**(Salt Lake City)** –An article by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state health departments from Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Washington, contains some alarming news for these eight western states. In recent decades these states have had lower rates of gonorrhea than other U.S. regions; however, from 2000 to 2005 rates in these states increased 42%. In Utah, the rate increased 195%, or from 10.3 cases per 100,000 to 30.4 per 100,000 (from 231 to 727 cases). Preliminary data for 2006 indicates that Utah will exceed 850 cases. Gonorrhea is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) that can cause pelvic inflammatory disease, chronic pelvic pain and infertility.

The exact causes for the increase in gonorrhea are not fully understood at this time. However, Utah officials believe that the increase is due to a mix of changes in testing that have led to finding more cases and a true increase in the number of Utahns who are getting gonorrhea. State Epidemiologist, Dr. Robert Rolfs says “People could be having more high risk sex or not getting treated as soon so they have longer to transmit the infection to somebody else. We may also be having less success at getting their sex partners treated quickly.” The UDOH and local health departments are working with the CDC to further investigate and respond to the increases. To view the full report visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5610.pdf>.

April is National STD Awareness Month. In conjunction with this, UDOH is planning a Free STD Testing week for April 16-20, when anyone can go to a designated clinic and receive free testing for gonorrhea, chlamydia, and HIV. For more information on the free testing please call, 801-538-6171. The Davis County Health Department is planning a summit for local and state health department personnel, as well as community members, to identify how best to respond to these recent increases in STDs (gonorrhea and chlamydia).

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care; and promoting healthy lifestyles.*